



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/320,421	05/26/1999	LEONARD FORBES	303.586US1	4705

21186 7590 04/22/2003

SCHWEGMAN, LUNDBERG, WOESSNER & KLUTH, P.A.
P.O. BOX 2938
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402

EXAMINER

TRA, ANH QUAN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2816

DATE MAILED: 04/22/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

09/320,421

Examiner

Quan Tra

Applicant(s)

FORBES ET AL.

Art Unit

2816

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 February 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 10, 11, 13-18, 20-24, 26-38 and 40-45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10, 11, 13-18, 20-24, 26-38 and 40-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____. 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This office action is in response to the Response filed 02/20/2003. The rejection in previous office action is maintained.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 10, 11, 13, 14, 16-18, 20-24, 26, 27, 29-38, 44 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Austin (USP 5982690) in view of Chung (USP 5442209).

As to claim 10, Austin shows in figure 1D a latch circuit (105) comprising: a pair of cross-coupled amplifiers (153, 155 and 154, 156), wherein each amplifier includes: a transistor of a first conductivity type (155, 156); a pair field effect transistors (MOSFETs) of a second conductivity type (153, 154), wherein the drain region of the pair MOSFETs is coupled to a drain region of the transistor of the first conductivity type in the same amplifier, is coupled directly to a gate of the first transistor of the first conductivity type in the other amplifier of the pair of cross-couple amplifiers, and is coupled to a gate of the pair MOSFETs in the other amplifier of the pair of cross-couple amplifiers; a pair of input transmission lines (outputs of circuit 103), wherein each one of the pair of input transmission lines is coupled to another gate of one of the

Art Unit: 2816

pair MOSFETs in each amplifier, the pair of input transmission lines directly coupling the another gate in each amplifier external to the latch circuit; and a pair of output transmission lines (lat, /lat), wherein each one of the pair of output transmission lines is coupled to the drain region of the first transistor and to the drain region of the pair MOSFET. Thus, figure 1D shows all limitations of the claim except for the pair MOSFETs is a dual gated MOSFET. However, Chung teaches in figure 1 a MOS transistor comprising a single drain, a single source and plurality gates. This MOSFET having a function as plurality of transistors connected in parallel. The advantage of Chung's MOSFET is the chip area can be reduced in device fabrication. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to make Austin's pair MOSFET (153 and 154) as a transistor having single drain, single source, and two gates (dual gated MOSFET) for the purpose of saving space.

As to claim 11, figure 1D shows the transistor of a first conductivity type is a p-channel metal oxide semiconductor (PMOS) transistor, and the dual-gated MOSFET include n-channel metal oxide semiconductor (NMOS) transistors.

As to claim 13, figure 1D shows the pair of input transmission lines are bit lines and the bit line capacitance are removed from the pair of output transmission lines.

As to claim 14, figure 1B shows circuit 51 coupled to memory array circuit. It is inherent that the memory array circuit comprising number of memory cells.

As to claim 16, Austin 's figure 1D shows all elements of the claims except for the sense amplifier is able to output a full output sense voltage in less than 10 nanoseconds (ns). However, it is well known in the art that the speed for the amplifier circuit dependent on the size of the transistors in the amplifier. Furthermore, Austin amplifier circuit having similar structure as

Art Unit: 2816

Applicant amplifier circuit figure 2A. Therefore, Austin circuit is able to provide a full output of the sense voltage less than 10 nanoseconds depend on the size of the transistors in the amplifier. it is would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the size of Austin amplifier circuit in order for the circuit is able to providing an output less than 10 nanoseconds because it is seen as a design choice.

As to claim 32, Austin's figures 1D, 4 and 5 and Chung's figure 1 show all elements of the claim except for the processor and memory are formed on the same semiconductor substrate and integrated circuit. However, it is well known in the art that elements that from on the same semiconductor substrate and integrated circuit having the advantage of matching temperature and space and cost saving. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to make the processor and the memory to be formed on the same substrate and integrated circuit for the purpose of matching temperature and space or cost saving.

Claims 17, 18, 20-23, 26, 27, 29-31, 33-38, 44 and 45 recite similar limitations of claims 10, 11, 13-16. Therefore, they are rejected for the same reasons. Further called for claim 29, it is inherent for the memory circuit comprising a processor (figure 4).

As to claim 24, Austin's figure 1D shows the memory circuit includes a folded bit line memory circuit.

3. Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Austin (USP 5982690) in view of Chung (USP 5442209) and Ang et al (USP 5942918) (newly cited).

As to claim 15, the combination of Austin's figure 1D and Chung's figure 1 shows all elements of the claims except for the sense amplifier is coupled to a power supply voltage of less than 1.0 Volts. However, Ang et al.'s figure 2 shows an amplifier circuit (231-233, 235, 237,

Art Unit: 2816

244-247) having similar structure with Austin amplifier circuit (105). Ang et al.'s amplifier circuit operable with a supply voltage less than 1 volts (column 1, lines 50-55). Furthermore, it is well known in the art that the power consumption of the circuit will be saved if it operates with a lower supply voltage. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to select to supply Austin amplifier circuit with a voltage less than 1 volts for the purpose of saving power consumption.

4. Claims 28 and 40-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6069828) in view of Austin (U.S. Patent No. 5982690) and Chung (USP 5442209).

As to claims 28 and 40, Kaneko et al. teaches in figure 2 a memory circuit, and a method thereof, comprising a number of memory arrays (two sides of sense amplifier 15); a sense amplifier (15), a complementary pair of bit lines (BL1, BL1, BL2, BL2) input to the sense amplifier, a number of equilibration (14a, 14b), and a number of isolation transistors (18a, 18b). Thus, figure 2 shows all elements of the claim except for the detail of the sense amplifier. However, Austin's figure 1D and Chung's figure 1 show a sense amplifier circuit (see the rejection above) comprising a pair of cross-coupled inverters (153, 155 and 154, 156), wherein each inverter includes: a PMOS transistor (155, 156), a dual-gated NMOS transistor (153, 154) wherein the drain region for the dual-gated NMOS transistor is coupled to a drain region of the PMOS transistor; a pair of bit lines (outputs of 103), wherein each one of the pair of bit lines is coupled to a first gate of the dual-gated transistor in each inverter; and a pair of output transmission lines (out, /out), wherein each one of the pair of output transmission lines is coupled to the drain region of the dual-gated NMOS transistor and the drain region of the PMOS

Art Unit: 2816

transistor in each inverter. Austin's amplifier circuit having the advantage of reducing power dissipation. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having an ordinary skill in the art to use the Austin's sense amplifier circuit for Kaneko et al.'s figure 2 for the purpose of reducing power dissipation.

As to claim 41, Austin's figure 1D shows all elements of the claims except for the sense amplifier is coupled to a power supply voltage of less than 1.0 Volts. However, the selection of the power supply to be less than 1.0 Volts is seen as an obvious design expedient dependent upon particular environment of use to ensure optimum performance.

As to claim 42, Austin's figure 1D shows all elements of the claims except for the sense amplifier is able to output a full output sense voltage in less than 10 nanoseconds (ns). However, it is also seen as a design choice for designing the output speed of the sense amplifier to be able to output a full output sense voltage in less than 10 nanoseconds (ns) dependent upon particular environment of use to ensure optimum performance.

As to claim 43, from the rejection above, it is inherent for the sense amplifier removes the bit line capacitance from a pair of output nodes of the sense amplifier.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to the arguments under "The cited reference are nonanalogous art". Austin teaches a sense amplifier circuit. Austin fails to teach how to fabricate the amplifier circuit. One skill in the art would have searched in a difference area in order to find particular the structure for transistors in order to fabricate the circuit with the minimum power consumption and cost.

In response to the arguments under “There is no suggest to combine Chung with Austin because them would render Austin unsatisfactory for it intended purpose”. Chung suggesting the ideal of combining plurality of parallel transistors as one transistor having plurality of gates. This combination will reduce the size of the circuit. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skills in the art to combine Austin’s transistors N5 and N6 as one transistor having two gates and combine transistors N7 ad N8 as one transistor having two gates for the purpose of saving space. The modified Austin circuit will not change it operating function because the circuit still have the same elements as it was. Therefore, the combination of references will not render Austin unsatisfactory for it intended purpose.

In response to the arguments under “There is no suggestion to combine Chung with Austin from the prior art and not from Applicant’s specification. Chung suggesting the ideal of combining plurality of parallel transistors as one transistor having plurality of gates. This combination will reduce the size of the circuit. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skills in the art to combine Austin’s transistors N5 and N6 as one transistor having two gates and combine transistors N7 ad N8 as one transistor having two gates for the purpose of saving space.

In response to the argument under “Additional comments”. It is notorious well known in the art that the speed of the circuit is determined by the sizes of transistors in the circuit. Austin’s circuit having similar structure with Applicant’s circuit. Therefore, Austin’s circuit is capable of operate at the same speed with Applicant’s circuit. It is seen as an obvious design choice for selecting the size of the transistors in Austin’s circuit in order for the circuit providing output voltage less than 10 nanoseconds.

Conclusion

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. These references are cited as interest because they show some circuits analogous to the claimed invention.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Quan Tra whose telephone number is (703) 308-6174. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 7:40 am to 4:20 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tim Callahan, can be reach at (703) 308-4876. The fax phone number for this group is (703) 308-7722.

Application/Control Number: 09/320,421

Page 9

Art Unit: 2816

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

A handwritten signature, possibly reading "QT", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

QT

April 16, 2003

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely "Terry D. Cunningham".
Terry D. Cunningham
Primary Examiner